

VZCZCXYZ0000
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHBH #0160/01 0751704
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 161704Z MAR 09
FM AMEMBASSY NASSAU
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6213

UNCLAS NASSAU 000160

SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [SNAR](#) [CFED](#) [CJAN](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [SOCI](#) [BF](#)

SUBJECT: FY2010 DEMARCHE/OBJECTIVES FOR THE MAJORS LIST
REPORT TO THE GOVERNMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE
BAHAMAS (GCOB)

1. (SBU) Narcotics Affairs Officer (NAO) delivered reftel demarche to Ministry of National Security Permanent Secretary Missouri Sherman-Peter on March 13. NAO shared reftel points regarding the Majors List process and, while Sherman-Peter said she understood the rationale behind including The Bahamas on the Majors List as a transit country, she expressed concern about negative portrayals in Bahamian and American news media. Noting the GCOB's successful participation in Operation Bahamas, Turks and Caicos and bilateral counternarcotics efforts since the 1980s, NAO told Sherman-Peter the embassy had engaged with local media in the past to ensure accurate coverage of the Majors List announcement and would continue to do so.

2. (U) Per reftel instructions, the text of the Majors List diplomatic note is included below. The diplomatic note was delivered on March 13.

BEGIN TEXT

No. 045/09

The Embassy of the United States of America presents its compliments to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas and has the honor to request the Ministry transmit the following information regarding the United States Government's annual narcotics "Majors List" report to relevant officers in the Government of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas.

The United States Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended (FAA), requires the President to submit to Congress an annual report identifying each country determined by the President to be a major drug transit country or major illicit drug producing country. The President is also required in that report to identify any country on the majors list that has "failed demonstrably. . . to make substantial efforts" during the previous twelve months to adhere to international counternarcotics agreements and to take certain counternarcotics measures set forth in United States law. United States Government assistance under the current foreign operations appropriations act may not be provided to any country designated as having "failed demonstrably."

While the President will make his Majors List determinations based on The Bahamas compliance with all aspects of the 1988 UN Drug Convention, our bilateral agreements, other multilateral agreements, and the elimination of corruption, there are specific areas of interest that we will highlight during the Majors List process.

Though The Bahamas was identified as a major drug transit point last year, the United States Government appreciates the efforts of the Government of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas to disrupt drug smuggling operations in Bahamian territory. The Bahamas' commitment and cooperation in Operations Bahamas Turks and Caicos (OPBAT) and The Bahamas' collaboration with United States Government partner agencies including the Department of State, the Department of Defense, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the U.S. Coast Guard, and other U.S. law enforcement agencies. These partnerships have helped build a solid foundation for our efforts to stop the flow of

illegal narcotics. The United States Government appreciates and highly encourages continued combined operations and cooperative efforts to maintain close partnership and mutual understanding of regional threats and challenges. Continued use of the Comprehensive Maritime Agreement for law enforcement operations is particularly effective.

The United States Government appreciates the Government of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas efforts to maintain and operate its maritime assets in key locations to respond to smuggling threats in Bahamian waters and the decision to acquire new aviation and maritime assets for the Royal Bahamian Defense Force should enhance its effectiveness. This same spirit of cooperation and foresight should be applied to our efforts to insure the rapid reconstruction of OPBAT facilities in Matthewtown, Great Inagua - a critical location for OPBAT's continued strong and effective counternarcotics presence in the southern Bahamas.

In addition to efforts to interdict illicit drugs transiting The Bahamas, the United States Government asks the Government of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas to continue to facilitate the extradition of individuals involved in narcotics trafficking. The extradition of Dwight and Keva Majors last year was an outstanding example of cooperation. Future cooperation that results in more rapid extradition is needed.

The United States Government also encourages the Government of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas to assist the Government of Haiti in its efforts to fight narcotics trafficking and upgrade the capabilities of the Haitian National Police (HNP). Recent training programs conducted by the Royal Bahamian Police Force with the HNP were good step in the right direction. Further cooperation, such as the placement of a HNP officer at Great Inagua would facilitate interviews of Haitian vessel crewmembers transiting The Bahamas and help deter drug and migrant smuggling.

Finally, the United States Government appreciates the many steps the Government of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas has taken to enhance security at Lynden Pindling International Airport, however it continues to be a concern since it remains vulnerable to illicit drugs and illegal migrants traveling to the United States. A robust program of oversight, vetting and training should be considered to counter that threat.

The Embassy of the United States of America avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas the assurances of its highest consideration.

Embassy of the United States of America,
Nassau, March 13, 2009.

ZUNIGA-BROWN